Three Cups Of Tea

By: Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin

Section 1

Chapters 1-3

Summary

The book I’m reading is called *Three Cups of Tea.* In these first three chapters I was introduced to the main character, the setting and of course what the book was going to be about. This book is about how a mountaineer, George Mortenson, drifted into an impoverished Pakistan village after failing to climb K2. He is moved by the people in the village kindness and decides to come back and build a school. From reading the first three chapters; the book is very personable and people can relate and give feedback on the challenges the characters are facing. The main character George Mortenson, the author, is on a descent through the rough terrain in Pakistan’s Karakoram Range, after his failed attempt to climb K2. He feels discouraged that his body has given up on him, but persists to keep moving on. After another freezing night, he awakens and wanders around to see if he can get help. He starts to hear sounds and eventually stumbles upon his guide, Mouzafer, who was supposed to help him get to Askole. But after 7 days he strays from Mouzafer, once again, and finds himself in a whole different village. This is where Mortenson meets the people of the village, even though he didn’t know quite where he was; as well he wasn’t in the right village to begin with. After being there for weeks, he reflects on how poor the villagers are and sees the lack of education the kids are getting. He is so moved by the hospitality the people of the village have provided him that he decides to come back to the village and build a school for the village.

Reflection

The book started out very boring and was hard to comprehend at points, but I soon got back on track with the story. This part of the book was very inspiring. It took a while to progress, but as I kept reading I became inspired and felt a part of the story. I was inspired because Morten son wasn’t even planning on going to this village, but he, himself, becomes moved by the villagers open arms and willingness to take care of him, that he decides he wants to build a school for them. This part of the book makes you think twice about the things so many people take granted for in this world. Even through his failure to climb K2, he finds a way to make it a positive for himself; as well he is able to reflect on himself.

Application

“What inherent human characteristics span time and culture?”

Throughout these three chapters, I can say that the willingness to always help others that are less fortunate has always span time and culture. We are a fast pace society, but somehow we always seem to stop and take the time to help those in need. Throughout time you can see that we’ve all been able to survive because someone has helped us along the way. We didn’t get here on our own, someone helped us get here, and someone was willing to do this. Someone took the time and stopped to help us develop, grow, and learn. I feel as if this all relates to what Mortenson was doing. He didn’t even know where he was going, he was starving and thirsty, but he took the time to reflect upon himself and grant the village a school. As we look back in time and culture, people have experienced things that make them want to help.

Section 2

Chapters 4-6

Summary

Mortenson returns back to California and starts to reflect on his own childhood; the challenges and hardships he had faced as a young child. Basically chapter 4 explains how his family moved to Africa, how his family was poor, and how he had to join the army to support his family. As his life moved on, he moved to California, following his dad’s death. In California he got involved in climbing; he becomes an expert on climbing and is asked to go on a trip as a nurse, to climb K2. The story then jumps back to the present and Mortenson reflects on the promise that he made to the village. Getting in to chapter 5, Mortenson tries to start fundraisers for his goal to build this school. With his lack of knowledge of fundraising and computers, he doesn’t get very far. He then sends out 580 letters in desperation for help. He only receives a 100 dollar check from a news anchor, Tom Brokaw. He then stumbles upon Tom Vaughn, who writes a small article in a mountaineering magazine about Mortenson’s project. After this article is written Mortenson receives a letter from a wealthy scientist named Jean Hoerni and Hoerni gives Mortenson 12,000 dollars, which Mortenson had estimated would be the total cost of the school. He then travels back to the village in Pakistan. In chapter 6, Mortenson meets with various people to acquire the assets he needs in order to start building his school. As he starts planning he learns that negotiation is everything and the only way to get what you want is by having the money to bargain. The business that Mortenson wants to use is run by; what can be compared to as a “mafia”. So to help himself he takes the steps to earn respect from these individuals. As this chapter ends he reflects on the transformations that lay ahead of him.

Reflection

These three chapters have been the most interesting so far. I like the cohesion the chapters have with one another. I felt like chapters 1-3 had cohesion, but it was much harder to identify. I liked how he was reflecting on his life and how he was able to relate his upbringings as a child and relate to his project he’s producing in Pakistan. This part of the book is eye opening. It’s cool to be able to connect with the culture of the Pakistani people. All they really want is respect. You have to give respect in order to earn it, and that’s what I like about this section.

Application

The characteristics throughout this section of the book include, interaction with certain people, the behavior of people, and overall the ideals of people. Mortenson wants to be able to start his project, but in order to do this he has to interact with certain and be able to adapt to their surroundings and their customs. This spans time and culture because we’ve all had to adapt to certain people and surroundings. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t be alive today. As time has passed by we’ve changed drastically and if you don’t move with the pace of things, you’re going to be left behind. His behavior also plays a big role in progressing further with his project. If he acts out or disrespects the people he wants to work with, he won’t get anywhere. As time has passed by, people’s behaviors are what have gotten them when they are today. Your actions always speak louder than your words. If you act out and goof off, your behavior is going to come back on you and it isn’t going to turn out well. For example if you act out on an interview for a job, they won’t want to hire you. And we’ve seen as time has passed by that people with good behaviors have made it to the top. As far as human ideals go in this book, Mortenson has to adapt to their ideals. He has to twist his ideals around in order to connect with the village. We’ve all done this, we’ve changed ourselves to adapt to other people’s moods and personalities. We’ve changed for religious reasons, etc. It goes on and on.